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# SPECIAL MEMORANDUM

HANOI CHARGES OF U.S. BOMBING OF  
NONMILITARY TARGETS IN NORTH VIETNAM

Prepared for the White House

RADIO PROPAGANDA DIVISION

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HANOI CHARGES OF U.S. BOMBING OF  
NONMILITARY TARGETS IN NORTH VIETNAM

Since the inception of the U.S. air strikes against North Vietnam, Hanoi propaganda has consistently charged or implied that the prime targets were nonmilitary. It has referred frequently to strikes against "economic" targets and noted strikes against communications routes, but has tended to blur the military significance of these targets and sought to distort the intent of the strikes by charging that "populated centers near" bridges, highways, and so forth were hit. Aside from the references to communications targets and occasional claims that "people's security posts" in the demilitarized zone were struck, it has never acknowledged that a specific military target was hit. U.S. "assertions that American aircraft strike only at military targets" is branded "a sheer lie" in the North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry "white book" released in Hanoi media on 16 July.

Hanoi's accounts of the initial strikes in February and March claimed that "civilians, hospitals, and schools" were hit and that "human and material losses" were inflicted on the local populations. Hanoi's references to the nature of the air-strike targets have followed essentially the same pattern to date. Both in its news accounts and in official protests, Hanoi consistently describes the alleged attacks on civilian targets in such inflammatory terms as "wanton" or "savage." It is normally terse and cryptic in describing the nature of the damage or extent of casualties, but departs from this practice in sporadic bursts of publicity for "atrocities" incidents--such as an alleged attack on a leprosarium in June--which are selected for special propaganda treatment.

Hanoi is normally vague in identifying the locale of alleged civilian targets, though it generally names at least the province or district in which the strike is supposed to have taken place. The most common claim throughout the period under review is that U.S. planes attacked "residential quarters," "civilian centers," or "populated points" in a particular province, sometimes with the notation that these "points" were situated "along highways" or "on communications routes." When specific cities are named as targets, Hanoi normally reports curtly that they were "bombed and strafed" and gives no detail. Of 25 available protests issued by the Vietnamese People's Army (VPA) during May, only one departed from such vagueness as to locale and target--an "atrocity"-type claim that American planes strafed a school in Nghe An Province on 23 May.

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Since May, Hanoi has tended to be somewhat more specific in describing the nature of alleged civilian targets, although the formulas cited above have remained the norm. Seven of 25 VPA protests in June went beyond mere references to certain cities or "populated" areas, identifying the targets as schools, hospitals, factories, and so forth. There were seven such specific charges in July and five in August. In late August Hanoi introduced the currently publicized claim that dams and water conservancy installations are also being hit. Some propaganda has gone on to charge that the purpose of the strikes against dams is to cause floods and famine, but this charge has not so far been leveled officially by the VPA.

Charges of strikes at specific civilian targets are reproduced in the compilation on the following pages.

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HANOI OFFICIAL CHARGES OF U.S. BOMBING OF NONMILITARY TARGETS  
IN NORTH VIETNAM FROM FEBRUARY THROUGH MID-SEPTEMBER 1965

The following compilation includes all references in Vietnamese People's Army (VPA) communiques or protests to the International Control Commission (ICC) since February 1965 to specific nonmilitary targets allegedly bombed by the United States in North Vietnam. It records available VPA charges specifying such targets as schools, hospitals, and so forth, as well as charges specifying civilian casualties. It excludes the vast number of VPA charges--roughly 20 a month--which identify U.S. targets only by the name of a city or as "populated centers" in a particular province or district.

It is Hanoi media's practice to broadcast news reports on each air strike claimed to have taken place, and in most cases to follow up with a VPA communique or protest. The charges in these protests, which are publicized almost daily, may be regarded as an accurate representation of the many charges which have appeared in the radio newscasts, VIETNAMESE NEWS AGENCY (VNA) transmissions, and radio and press commentaries.

The charges are reproduced in chronological order, with the operative passages quoted textually. The date in each case is the date of the communique or protest. The source in all cases is the Hanoi radio or VNA.

8 February: U.S. jets on 7 and 8 February "strafed and bombed hospitals and habitations, causing human and material damage," in Dong Hoi municipality and "some other areas in" Quang Binh Province and the Vinh Linh sector.

8 March: At 1030 hours on 8 March, U.S. jets "bombed and strafed Co Bai village in the northern part of the demilitarized zone." The raid "lasted about ten minutes and caused human and material losses to the local population."

15 March: The U.S. Air Force on 15 March "bombed and strafed civilians, hospitals, and schools and perpetrated intolerable crimes against the Vietnamese people" in Nghia Dan and "a number of places" in Dien Chau and Quynh Luu districts of Nghe An Province.

19 March: U.S. planes on 19 March "strafed a number of localities" in Do Luong and Thanh Chuong areas, Nghe An Province, "choosing villages, markets, and river landing-stages as targets for their bombing and strafing."

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21 March: At 1350 hours on 21 March, planes "bombed and strafed a number of localities near Vinh O village in the northern demilitarized zone, damaging a number of houses of people in the area."

30 March: At 1300 hours on 30 March, U.S. jets "bombed and strafed a certain number of areas belonging to Dong Hoi municipality and even attacked civilian fishing boats at Vinh Thai village, Vinh region."

3 April: U.S. jets on 3 April "strafed fishing boats belonging to inhabitants of Vinh Thai commune in Vinh Linh area."

5 April: On 5 April "the U.S. imperialists and their flunkys sent many waves of aircraft to drop napalm and phosphorous bombs on populated villages in Vinh Linh area, and wantonly strafed a number of bus stations and urban centers in Nghe An Province, North Vietnam."

7 April: On 7 April U.S. jet fighter planes in many waves bombed and strafed some residential quarters in Quang Binh Province and Vinh Linh area and Con Co Island."

21 April: At 0200 hours on 21 April, U.S. planes "fired rockets on Vinh Linh commune in the Vinh Linh area."

✓ 23 May: "U.S. and puppet piratical aircraft on 23 May wantonly bombed and strafed a school and a hospital in Nghia Dan district, Nghe An Province, and the Tu Tru market in Tho Xuan district, Thanh Hoa Province, killing or wounding 79 civilians, among them many children, women, and patients."

9 June: "The United States repeatedly sent many formations of jet fighters to carry out strafing and bombing raids against factories, government offices, schools, and densely populated areas of Vinh city, capital of Nghe An Province. On the same day, U.S. aircraft also strafed and bombed many economic targets and populated areas along highways north of Binh Province, northwest of Nghe An Province, west of Ha Tinh Province, and in Thanh Hoa Province and Hon Mat island."

10 June: On 9 June "many groups of U.S. jet fighters again bombed and strafed schools, (power?) stations, post office, and densely populated areas of Vinh city, North Vietnam."

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✓ 14 June: Jets on 13 June "bombed Quynh Lap sanatorium" in Nghe An Province. As a result, many people were killed or wounded. [A spate of propaganda over this alleged incident included the charge that 82 people were killed and 30 wounded and that some 50 houses were destroyed.]

19 June: On 18 June "U.S. aircraft bombed Son La <sup>Military Complex</sup> city and wantonly strafed and bombed a hospital and offices in this province."

21 June: On 20 June many formations of jet fighters bombed and strafed populated areas along highways in Nam Dinh, Ninh Binh, Thanh Hoa, and Nghe An Provinces and two "fired at the boats of the population of the coastal area in Ninh Binh Province."

28 June: U.S. aircraft "savagely strafed fishing boats belonging to the people of Dien Chau district, Nghe An."

29 June: [letter to ICC enclosing copy of 27 June DRV Foreign Ministry statement denouncing U.S. "escalation" of war]: "...The U.S. and puppet air forces have daily bombed and strafed indiscriminately many economic establishments of North Vietnam, such as factories, state farms, and storehouses, and densely populated areas including towns and townships, not sparing even hospitals, health centers for old people, schools, markets, pagodas, churches, and so forth."

1 July: On 30 June U.S. aircraft "bombed and strafed Son La provincial town and savagely attacked Tuyen Hoa hospital in Quang Binh Province."

✓ 5 July: A 2 July U.S. air raid on the "densely populated industrial city" of Nam Dinh "killed 11 inhabitants and wounded 65 others. ...What is particularly grave is that on 4 July the U.S. Air Force launched a second attack on Nam Dinh city, bombing and strafing barbarously several populated quarters and industrial establishments."

✓ 7 July: "During their 5 July air raid U.S. aircraft savagely bombed and strafed the Trung Son cooperative farm in Thieu Hoa district, Thanh Hoa Province, killing 35 people and wounding 22 others, mostly old persons, women, and children. They once again bombed Vinh Linh hospital." These are among "the many attacks launched so far by the U.S. Air Force on town and cities, populated areas, hospitals, sanatoriums, rest places for old folk, markets, pagodas, and churches."

✓ 9 July: On 8 July U.S. aircraft "carried out a most savage bombing and strafing raid on the civilian houses and the TB sanatorium of Cau Bo, a southern suburb of Thanh Hoa provincial capital. As a result of this raid, 40 persons were killed and wounded, including many old people, women, children, and patients."

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10 July: On 9 July U.S. aircraft bombed and strafed "many populated areas and economic establishments in Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, and Ha Tinh provinces. They also bombarded Vinh city, destroying a number of schools, factories, and government offices. Particularly serious, at 1400 hours on the same day, U.S. aircraft bombarded Yen Bai provincial capital, destroying a hospital and many dwelling houses and factories, killing or wounding many people."

14 July: U.S. jets bombed Yen Bai provincial town and launched a new attack on Son La town, capital of the Northwest Autonomous Region, "wantonly bombing and strafing the local hospital and a number of economic establishments."

18 July: On 17 July U.S. jets "strafed civilian barges at Ben Thuy, Nghe An Province."

23 July: [forwarding a 15 July statement of the DRV Ministry of Public Health "on the deliberate and frantic bombing raids by the U.S. imperialists on medical establishments of the DRV"]: "Up to 11 July 1965 the U.S. aggressors burned or destroyed by bombing or strafing nearly 30 medical establishments in North Vietnam. ... Most typical were the bombing and strafing by U.S. aircraft of the Quynh Lap leper sanatorium and the TB hospital in Thanh Hoa Province resulting in a total of nearly 179 killed and more than 100 wounded."

2 August: On 1 August U.S. jets "bombed and strafed many densely populated areas, the college, the hospital, and other establishments in Vinh, capital of Nghe An Province."

3 August: On 2 August U.S. aircraft "wantonly bombed and strafed residential quarters and factories" in Nam Dinh, "causing many losses to the people."

24 August: On 22 August U.S. aircraft "strafed the Ban Thach irrigation works in Thanh Hoa."

24 August: On 21, 22, and 23 August "many U.S. jet fighters bombed and strafed the Ban Thach irrigation works in Tho Xuan district, Thanh Hoa Province. On 23 August 1965 the U.S. Air Force also bombed the Ban Quy aqueduct in Phieu Hoa district, Thanh Hoa Province."

27 August: On 26 August U.S. aircraft "fired rockets on the Bai Thuong dam area in Thanh Hoa Province." On 25 August U.S. aircraft "attacked many populated areas in Ha Tinh Province, including the Huong Khe hospital, Voi market in Ky Anh district, and the provincial secondary school. Besides, they strafed the Do Luong dam area in Nghe An Province. ...The U.S. imperialists'

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repeated attacks on public utility works such as dams, hospitals, schools, market places, and so forth constitute most odious crimes against the Vietnamese people... ."

5 September: On 4 September U.S. aircraft "attacked Vinh city and the Nam Dan dam in Nghe An Province." These raids followed "attacks on towns, urban centers, the Ban Thach, Do Luong, and Bai Thuong dams, hospitals, schools, and market places in many areas of North Vietnam."

✓ 10 September: On 9 September U.S. jet formations "bombed and strafed many populated areas and economic establishments in Phu Tho, Ha Tay, Thanh Hoa, and Nghe An provinces" and "again attacked Vinh city and the Suoi Hai dam in Ha Tay Province."

✓ 11 September: On 10 September U.S. jet formations "for the third time attacked Suoi Hai dam in Ha Tay Province" as part of "continual and systematic U.S. air attacks on towns, cities, dams, hospitals, schools, and public utility works in North Vietnam."

✓ 15 September: U.S. jets "attacked Vinh city and the Suoi Hai dam in Ha Tay Province" and "continued and systematic attacks on towns and cities and public utility works such as dams, hospitals, schools and so forth."

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ADDENDUM TO

FBIS SPECIAL MEMORANDUM OF 17 SEPTEMBER 1965:

"HANOI CHARGES OF U.S. BOMBING OF NONMILITARY TARGETS

IN NORTH VIETNAM FROM FEBRUARY THROUGH MID-SEPTEMBER 1965"

The listing below updates the compilation, provided in the FBIS Special Memorandum of 17 September 1965, of Vietnamese People's Army (VPA) charges of U.S. bombing of specific nonmilitary targets in North Vietnam since February, and records some additional charges leveled by the VPA during the period since mid-August.

It should be noted that all the charges reproduced in the Special Memorandum appeared in formal VPA protests to the International Control Commission (ICC). (Some of them were additionally publicized by Hanoi media in VPA "communiques," official announcements sometimes issued in parallel with the formal protests.) With the additions provided below, the compilation thus becomes a complete, double-checked record of formal VPA charges of U.S. bombing of nonmilitary targets in North Vietnam that are available to FBIS through the end of September.

The charges reproduced are those identifying nonmilitary targets as schools, hospitals, public buildings, and so forth, as well as charges specifying civilian casualties. Excluded are the vastly more numerous vague charges identifying U.S. targets only by the name of a city or as "populated centers" or "residential areas" in a particular province or district.

As in the Special Memorandum, the operative passages are quoted textually below. The dates refer to the dates of the VPA protests, and the source in each case in the Hanoi radio or the VIETNAMESE NEWS AGENCY (VNA).

AUGUST

17 August: On 16 August U.S. aircraft "indiscriminately bombed and strafed the hospital, technological school, power plant, and a number of public buildings in Vinh city."

18 August: On 17 August U.S. aircraft "again attacked Vinh city, wantonly bombing and strafing residential quarters, hospitals, schools, public offices, and factories."

22 August: On 21 August U.S. aircraft "bombed the TB sanatorium in Thanh Hoa for the second time and Son La hospital."

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SEPTEMBER

4 September: On 3 September U.S. aircraft "attacked the Nam Dan dam in Nghe An Province."

13 September: On 12 September U.S. aircraft "bombed Nam Dinh city for the eighth time, causing a number of civilian casualties, and again bombed the Suoi Hai dam in Ha Tay Province. Thus for four consecutive days from 9 to 12 September, the U.S. Air Force savagely attacked the Suoi Hai dam in an attempt to cause losses to the local population."

15 September: On 14 September U.S. aircraft "attacked Vinh city and the Suoi Hai dam in Ha Tay Province."

16 September: On 15 September U.S. aircraft bombed "the Suoi Hai dam in Ha Tay Province."

20 September: U.S. aircraft "attacked Ha Tinh provincial town and Dong Hoi, Quang Binh provincial town, indiscriminately bombing hospitals, populated areas, and public buildings there."

27 September: On 25 September U.S. aircraft "bombed the secondary school of Quynh Phong village, Quynh Luu district, Nghe An Province, killing or wounding 34 pupils."

Protest undated, reported by Hanoi radio 29 September: On 28 September U.S. jetfighters "dropped well over 50 bombs weighing 500 to 1,000 pounds" on the Do Luong dam. - NGHE AN PROVINCE

✓ Thai Nguyen Bridge 17 October

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